

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01

/149 W

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R 071531Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5396

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UK, ME, PFOR

SUBJECT: WILSON-HEATH CLASH OVER CEASEFIRE

1. SUMMARY: HAROLD WILSON ATTACKED THE HEATH GOVERNMENT
FOR ITS ALLEGED FAILURE TO COOPERATE WITH THE US TO
SECURE A CEASEFIRE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND HAS INVOKED
THE US STATE DEPARTMENT AS THE SOURCE OF HIS ACCUSATION.
END SUMMARY

2. IN A SPEECH TO A LABOR PARTY GATHERING ON NOVEMBER 4
AND IN AN EXCHANGE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ON THE FLOOR
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OF THE COMMONS NOVEMBER 6, WILSON REFERRED TO A CHARGE

"MADE IN WASHINGTON, WITH STATE DEPARTMENT AUTHORITY," THAT "IN THOSE EARLIEST DAYS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO COOPERATE IN AN APPEAL FOR AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE." HE WENT ON TO IMPLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION HAD BEEN PROMPTED BY ITS ASSUMPTION THAT THE EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS WERE WINNING.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER VIGOROUSLY DENIED WILSON'S ASSERTIONS. HE SAID THAT IN THE FIRST WEEK OF FIGHTING THE UK HAD STRUGGLED TO GET A MEETING OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL BUT WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE THE OTHER MEMBERS DID NOT WANT IT THEN. WHEN THE MEETING WAS FINALLY CONVENED, THE UK STATED IT WANTED A CEASEFIRE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

4. DURING THE FOLLOWING WEEK, HEATH CONTINUED, THE UK WORKED WITH EVERYONE POSSIBLE TO BRING ABOUT A CEASE-FIRE AND WOULD HAVE INTRODUCED A RESOLUTION IN THE SC IF IT HAD BEEN SUPPORTED. "WE CONCLUDED IT WOULD NOT HAVE HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE PARTIES IN THE FIGHTING NOR WERE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SC PREPARED TO PUT FORWARD A RESOLUTION EITHER ... OUR JUDGMENT WAS AGREED BY THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE TO BE RIGHT."

5. HEATH THEN REVEALED THAT HE HAD GIVEN WILSON A BRIEFING ON ALL THIS ON OCTOBER 15, WHEREUPON WILSON ASSERTED THAT IT WAS NOW CLEAR THAT THE US STATE DEPARTMENT DID NOT AGREE WITH WHAT HEATH HAD SAID THEN OR NOW. HEATH PERSISTED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD CONFIRMED TO BOTH THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND HIMSELF THAT THEIR JUDGMENT HAD BEEN RIGHT -- A JUDGMENT BORNE OUT BY THE FACT THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO GET ANOTHER RESOLUTION FOR A CEASEFIRE THROUGH THE SC FOR TEN DAYS.

6. HEATH ASKED WILSON TO WITHDRAW HIS ACCUSATION, BUT WILSON REPLIED THAT HE WOULD "WITHDRAW NOTHING THAT APPEARED FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT LAST WEEKEND (SIC) AND MR. HEATH MUST SAY WHETHER THE STATE DEPARTMENT WAS TELLING THE TRUTH OR NOT."

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7. COMMENT: WILSON'S CHARGE IS APPARENTLY BASED ON A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE THAT APPEARED IN THE "GUARDIAN" OCTOBER 31 UNDER THE HEADLINE, "BRITAIN LET US DOWN, CHARGES ANGRY AMERICA." THE ARTICLE, BY WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT PETER JENKINS, TOOK BOB MCCLOSKEY'S STATEMENTS OF OCTOBER 30 AS ITS POINT OF DEPARTURE, AND WENT ON, CITING "OTHER SOURCES," TO ASSERT THAT US ANGER WAS DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY AT BRITAIN FOR ITS

REFUSAL TO COMPLY WITH AN AMERICAN REQUEST, OCTOBER 13-
14, TO SPONSOR A CEASEFIRE RESOLUTION. SIR ALEC TRIED
TO SET THE STORY STRAIGHT IN HIS MEETING WITH THE
EUROPEAN-ATLANTIC GROUP ON NOVEMBER 1 (LONDON 12895
NOTAL), BUT WILSON OBVIOUSLY FEELS THERE IS STILL
POLITICAL CAPITAL TO BE MINED IN EXPLOITING ALLEGATIONS
OF US-UK DIFFERENCES DURING THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS.

ANNENBERG

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